

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 19030 01 OF 02 071407Z

51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 SNM-02 COME-00

EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 DOTE-00 FPC-01 SCEM-02 INT-08

SCI-06 CU-04 OPR-02 TRSE-00 A-01 FBO-01 OC-06 CCO-00

SY-10 DRC-01 /233 W

----- 064105

R 071230Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8831

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA

DEA HQS

CINCPAC

USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

13TH ADVON UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 19030

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 19030 01 OF 02 071407Z

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH
SUBJECT: READINGS OF THE BANGKOK POLITICAL BAROMETER
THROUGH DECEMBER 7

REF: BANGKOK 18676

SUMMARY: PINPRICK STRIKES AND WALKOUTS CONTINUE TO MAKE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS NERVOUS. STRIKES AMONG DOCK AND METROPOLITAN ELECTRICAL AUTHORITY WORKERS ARE POTENTIALLY MORE SERIOUS VENTURES. THE KING'S BIRTHDAY AT MID-WEEK FAILED TO BRIGHTEN THE ATMOSPHERE, DUE IN PART TO THE OIL SHORTAGE. THE FUROR OVER THE SWEDISH-BASED POLEMICAL TRACT AGAINST THE KING HAS CAUSED THE RTG TO RECALL THE THAI AMBASSADOR. DR. PUEY UNGPRAKORN, POPULAR CANDIDATE FOR FUTURE PRIME MINISTER, SLIPPED INTO TOWN DENYING POLITICAL AMBITIONS. THE RECENT ELECTIONS FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND RETURNED A MODERATE SLATE, INCLUDING THE PREVIOUS SECRETARY-GENERAL SOMBAT THAMRONGTHANYAWONGSE TO OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

1. PINPRICK STRIKES AND WALKOUTS CONTINUE TO DOMINATE POPULAR ATTENTION. THE STRIKES UP TO NOW MAY NOT HAVE DISRUPTED THE ECONOMY, BUT THEY DO MAKE THE CONSERVATIVES AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS UNEASY. NEW STRIKES AMONG DOCK AND METROPOLITAN ELECTRICAL AUTHORITY (MEA) WORKERS APPEAR TO BE A DIFFERENT STORY. MEA DEMANDS HAVE NOT BEEN MET AND POLICE RESPONDED TO WORKERS, THREATS TO CUT THE POWER BY STATIONING GUARDS AT SOME GENERATING PLANTS. GENERAL KRIT SIVARA, IN A NEWS CONFERENCE DECEMBER 3, STRESSED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS THE POWER TO DEAL WITH STRIKES AND DISORDERS BUT IS BEING LENIENT AT THIS TIME (BANGKOK 18862). KRIT SAID THAT IF UNREST GROWS, THEN THE PRIME MINISTER WILL ACT. THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT AND NOW KRIT'S ARE WARNINGS FROM THE TOP LEADERSHIP THAT IT IS UNITED AND BECOMING MORE CONCERNED. BOTH THE LABORERS ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND ARE ALSO MENTIONED IN THE NEWSPAPERS AS CAUTIONING THE STRIKERS.

2. THE KING'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS WERE RATHER SOMBER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 19030 01 OF 02 071407Z

THIS YEAR SINCE THE KING AND ASKED THAT THE TRADITIONAL ELECTRIC LIGHT DISPLAYS BE SUBDUED BECAUSE OF THE OIL SHORTAGE. THE KING'S PRECIPITOUS DEPARTURE FROM BANGKOK TO REMOTE KANCHANABURI PROVINCE THE DAY BEFORE HIS BIRTHDAY, LEAVING THE FOOD FOR ONE BANQUET PREPARED BUT THE GUESTS DISINVITED, CONTRIBUTED TO THE UNEASY ATMOSPHERE. (BANGKOK 18840).

3. THAI SENSITIVITIES CONCERNING THE KING RESULTED IN THE RECALL OF THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO SWEDEN. THE FUROR OVER THE LETTER FROM SWEDEN CRITICIZING THE KING HAS SURFACED AGAIN. THE LETTER PRECIPITATED THE VOCATIONAL STUDENT DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE SWEDISH EMBASSY NOVEMBER 21 (BANGKOK 18190). THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN A DECEMBER 7 PRESS RELEASE, ANNOUNCED THAT THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO SWEDEN HAD BEEN RECALLED BECAUSE THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WAS NOT MOVING AGAINST THE "THAI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT" TO RTG SATISFACTION (BANGKOK 18977). THE THAI MONARCHY IS A REVERED SYMBOL OF UNITY WHICH EVEN THE RESIDENT COMMUNIST INSURGENCY AVOIDS ATTACKING.

4. THE RUMOR MILLS IN BANGKOK HAVE REFOCUSSED ON COLONEL NARONG KITTAKACHORN, THIS TIME WITH OFFICIAL ASSISTANCE. LT. GEN. VITHOON YASAWASDI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, SAID IN HIS NOVEMBER 30 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD HEARD FROM A "HIGHLY RESPECTED" PERSON THAT NARONG WAS DETERMINED TO RETURN. GENERAL KRIT SIVARA ALSO DISCUSSED RUMORS ABOUT NARONG'S RETURN IN HIS DECEMBER 3 PRESS CONFERENCE (BANGKOK 18862), AND DISCUSSED ITS IMPLICATIONS WITH US DECEMBER 6 (BANGKOK 18910). THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IS QUOTED IN THE DECEMBER 7 "BANGKOK POST" AS SAYING THAT NARONG'S RETURN IS POSSIBLE. NO ONE IS CLAMORING FOR THAT EVENTUALITY, HOWEVER, AND WE WOULD PREDICT THAT SHOULD HE SOMEHOW MANAGE TO GET BACK, HE WOULD NOT RECEIVE A CORDIAL WELCOME. THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN A COORDINATED WARNING TO NARONG TO STAY AWAY.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 19030 02 OF 02 071348Z

51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 SNM-02 COME-00

EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 DOTE-00 FPC-01 SCEM-02 INT-08

SCI-06 CU-04 OPR-02 TRSE-00 A-01 FBO-01 OC-06 CCO-00

SY-10 DRC-01 /233 W

----- 063920

R 071230Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8832

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA

DEA HQS

CINCPAC

USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

13TH ADVON UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 19030

5. DR. PUEY UNGPHAKORN, FORMER GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF THAILAND AND DEAN OF ECONOMICS AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 19030 02 OF 02 071348Z

SITY, STOPPED BY BANGKOK DECEMBER 5 FOR A SHORT STAY. MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT PUEY IS A TOP CONTENDER FOR PRIME MINISTER IN THE FUTURE ELECTED GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF HIS REPUTATION AS AN OPPONENT OF THE THANOM REGIME, AN OUTSTANDING ECONOMIC EXPERT, AND AN HONEST MAN. DURING THIS VISIT, HOWEVER, HE SAID HE DOES NOT WANT TO TAKE ON THE PRIME MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES. NEVERTHELESS, HE TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK OUT ON A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS. PUEY SAID THAT THE PRESENT RASH OF STRIKES IS TO BE EXPECTED AND WILL PASS. HE JOINED THE CALL FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, AND COMMENTED THAT NON-AFFILIATED CANDIDATES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RUN IN THE COMING ELECTIONS.

6. THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING COMMITTEE (CDC) ARE GETTING TO THE CRUCIAL SUBJECTS. THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF PRESS AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW BIG THE PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE, HOW THE MEMBERS

SHOULD BE ELECTED, AND HOW STRONG A POLITICAL PARTY SHOULD BE. THERE WAS SOME CONSIDERATION OF A 300 SEAT SYSTEM WHERE DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR SPECIFIC CANDIDATES WOULD FILL 200 SEATS IN THE LOWER HOUSE, AND THEN THE VOTERS WOULD OPT FOR VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH WOULD THEN PROPORTIONATELY FILL THE REMAINING 100 SEATS. A CDC MEMBER DURING A PANEL DISCUSSION AT CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY HAD AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TIME ON THE PLATFORM EXPLAINING THE SYSTEM TO THE AUDIENCE. IT SUBSEQUENTLY HAS BEEN DROPPED. THE VIGOR OF PRESENT DEBATES AND LEAKS TO THE NEWSPAPERS MEANS THAT LITTLE HAS BEEN DECIDED IN RECENT DAYS.

7. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND REELECTED SOMBAT THAMRONGTHANYAWONGSE NSCT SECRETARY-GENERAL DECEMBER 6. SOMBAT, AN ENGINEERING STUDENT AT KASETSART UNIVERSITY, HELD THAT POSITION BEFORE THE NSCT LEADERSHIP RESIGNED ON NOVEMBER 18 UNDER CRITICISM (BANGKOK 18300). THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, COMPOSED OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION PRESIDENTS, AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMPOSED OF STUDENT UNION ELECTED NSCT REPRESENTATIVES, HELD A JOINT MEETING TO ELECT THE NEW NSCT LEADER-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 19030 02 OF 02 071348Z

SHIP. SOMBAT DEFEATED HIS RIVAL, THANET CHAROENMUANG, BY A WIDE MARGIN. KANOK WONGTRAGNAN ALSO RETURNED TO HIS FORMER POSITION AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. PINYAPONG SUVAVANICHKUL BECAME THE NEW DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL FOR EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, WHICH THANET USED TO HOLD, REMAINS EMPTY FOR LACK OF NOMINATIONS. SOMBAT'S ELECTION ASSURES A MODERATE LEADERSHIP FOR THIS KEY STUDENT GROUP (BANGKOK 18880).

8. THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND AND THE ASIAN STUDENTS ASSOCIATION HELD THE LONG PLANNED ASIAN STUDENT CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN BANGKOK RECENTLY. THE AUSTRALIAN AND SINGAPORIAN DELEGATES PUT THE MODERATION OF THE THAI, CAMBODIAN AND LAO DELEGATES TO A TEST. AFTER THEIR CONFERENCE THEY STAGED PROTESTS AT THE JAPANESE, AMERICAN, AND KOREAN EMBASSIES, WAITING AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO TALK WITH THE AMBASSADOR HIMSELF (BANGKOK 18842). KINTNER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM, POLITICAL STABILITY, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, KING, LABOR STRIKES, DOCKS, ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, ELECTRIC POWER, AMBA SSADORS, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL RECALL, GOVERNMENT IN EXILE, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BANGKO19030
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731239/aaaabcnm.tel
Line Count: 272
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BANGKOK 18676
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Nov-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <29-Nov-2001 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: READINGS OF THE BANGKOK POLITICAL BAROMETER THROUGH DECEMBER 7
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005